

***Kairos***  
by  
Jason Sturner

**Smashwords Edition**

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**Note to reader:** Due to the nature of digital formatting, some of the following poems may have lost their original structure. If you would like to see the poems in their intended design, please visit my [website](#) for reading options or consider purchasing a hard copy of the book. Thank you.

## Poetaster

I feel like a stranger  
to myself. Passionate for answers—  
ones I may never know:

The bee gathers nectar, he knows!  
The bird flies south, he knows!  
The poet documents his soul, he knows!  
that he knows nothing.

## Before the Storm Wet the Earth

A ladybug landed on my knee  
as I sat alone in a meadow  
awaiting the rain.

With its tiny head cocked  
and a trust in my silence  
it seemed to ask,

“Do you think I am beautiful?”

But all I could do  
was look away  
and wonder what stories  
my face was telling.

## Twelve and 12

Becoming twilight softens another midsummer day:  
stars spark up, the moon pulsates, oceans flinch,  
day aborts, night reclaims dignity;  
everything sleeps and everything awakens—  
the sun has pulled away my shadow.

Blushing dawn ascends the misty green hillside:  
stars flicker out, the moon hides away,  
night departs, day reclaims strategy;  
everything awakens and everything sleeps—  
the sun has tossed back my shadow.

## The Existence of You

Morning—delicate  
thirsty  
the sky yawns  
earth stretches...  
You near the ending of a peaceful, romantic dream.  
The silence of night subsides, you open your eyes—  
two emeralds shine beneath the sun.

Another day is born,  
another morning blessed.  
Such simple truths are easily told  
by the existence of you.

Night—romantic  
alive  
the stars shine  
earth sighs...  
You smile and all things are curious—  
a shooting star passes over your essence.

Another twilight has come,  
another night takes the stage.  
Standing ovations are easily understood  
by the existence of you.

I hear them...  
I hear them whenever I'm around you—  
the subtle, graceful heartbeats of angels.  
They surround you like butterflies gone mad.

And all my love for this world,  
all my love for beauty, for nature;  
all my love for life was awakened  
by the existence of you.

## About Love

We do not need thoroughfares  
when love seeks the heart

Such is the way of love—  
always destined, never sought

We do not need gold coins

when love comes without cost

Such is the value of love—  
always priceless, never bought

We do not need a wise man  
when love speaks through art

Such is the beauty of love—  
always instilled, never taught

And we do not need a ruse  
when love surrenders to us all

Such is the enigma of love—  
always mysterious, never caught

### When I am Loved by You

A silky aura  
surrounds me  
when I...

Lavender dreams  
visit me sleeping  
when I...

Golden extravagance  
fills my every moment  
when I am loved by you.

My nerves  
come to ease

My tensions  
are of no attention

My heart beats  
with subtle integrity

when I am loved by you.

### I Love You

I see more than you know

about all you are,  
and through my observations  
and from my analysis  
I've concluded that  
I love you.

Not a theory  
quite simply a fact—  
I love you,  
and that's that.

### Fresh Morning

Talk to me in the comfort of fresh morning  
when a bird's song I may enjoy  
as the cold of night surrenders to the warmth of dawn  
and there comes no sound from the telephone or door.

Hold me close as the sun plays with shadows  
when the curtains of our room blow wide  
as our hearts beat ever so quietly to the pulse of day  
and seagulls scavenge across the falling tide.

Know me when the day is newly born, my love  
when the spirit within this aging body is content  
as I steal gentle kisses from your soft lips  
and inhale the subtle fragrance of this moment.

### My Love, My Dream

It was surreal, now that I think back,  
as if a dream had wandered over the boundaries  
to deliver forth the shimmering light  
that was you.

And for a time, time was lost.  
A halcyon river became our guide.  
Its tranquil flow, a symbol of perfection,  
its reflection  
casting wildly off our eyes.

Love sprang to life, life became love.  
Every hue within this plane began to lighten.  
Our hearts chased, our meaning held no lies;

our souls tingled with gentle electricity  
beneath harlequin skies.

But we awoke one morning, heartsick to find,  
pink mist off the river had turned gray.  
Suddenly our angels were selectively blind—  
Was divinity so busy that it left us behind?

I screamed into a shower of diamonds.  
I'd lost you inside this sudden despair.  
Through the downpour I heard no reply,  
and soon discovered myself alone there.

No one ever told us  
that the weather changes in paradise  
or that the flowers can cry.  
The voice in the clouds never confessed  
that true love could die.

And so troubled waters made their way down the river;  
somewhere far off the ocean tide had raged.  
The dream cracked, then fell to pieces—  
leaving us broken  
and forever changed.

## Words are All I Have

Words I'm frightened to say  
dangle off deep breaths  
and gentle voice.

I listen to every syllable I speak to you,  
making sure no bad judgment in word  
or accent escapes.

And they fumble from my thoughts  
as the thoughts rumble:

*I want you back  
I can be different  
better  
this time*

Why I think my carefully selected  
phrases might persuade you I don't know.

But if to get you back were possible  
with my arrangement of speech,

Then I wish to be king of words,  
or poet of my time.

### Since You Went Away

Since you went away,  
I've been exploding  
all through my body.  
I'm a catastrophe.

Since you went away,  
I've only got the world to blame.  
Isn't it a shame?  
It's such a shame.

Since you went away,  
life is dizzy and earth is spinning.  
Electricity fills my alcohol,  
but it never jolts me happy.

Since you went away,  
I've been bitter and complex.  
A mind drifting through space  
unable to face its artistry.

Since you went away,  
I have lost me.

### Below Zero

A dimness has poured over the bright of her day,  
where dirty light tightens around the body, squeezing  
bitter truth from lemon-flavored karma.

An infant's voice bounces and plays inside her head,  
where love is a pale, frozen rainbow; shining  
just faintly above an empty playground.

The choice came with the crystal air of a cruel winter.  
The day was cold – unforgivably cold – but heat danced through it.  
No one would come close to understanding this.



Now, she is rigid; severely pensive beneath falling white.  
Acrobatic thoughts dissolve within her stillness  
as winter coils around her, ready to strike:

And in the icy wind, a baby cries.  
Tiny footprints in the snow fade away.  
Where once was a life is now empty space—  
empty space with a fading lullaby.

## Imperfection

Tonight, wanton moonlight.  
Stars cold and listless.  
Angels take human form  
to vent their sorrows—  
Imperfection.

Stillness, bowed head of a goddess.  
Gold sobriety stained with sour wine.  
Sugar-coated flawlessness now  
full of cavities—  
Imperfection.

Fervent dreams trapped in a subconscious box.  
Shiny green lizards dancing  
on clouds full of rain:  
Imperfection rears its beautiful, exotic head—  
and we are all sublime again.

## Spring

When storms unleash a thunderous might  
across the urban scenes of busy life  
and our neighbor cleans his grill;  
when warblers pass  
and the air smells like grass  
I know it is spring again.

When leaves shine healthy green  
across woodlands where robins sing  
and the flowers return to glory;  
when the sun warms our cheeks  
and the chipmunk peeks  
I know it is spring again.

When lovers create sparks  
across blooming city parks  
and we run through fields simply to run;  
when bitter cold has gone away  
and warm days resume our play  
I know it is spring again:

And all of nature rubs its eyes,  
stretching an eager frame.

## Kiss Me Hello

*Send me up, to the clouds;  
bring me there, hold me there,  
tell me not to go. Keep me,  
if you love me—kiss me hello.*

If, upon her wandering,  
she befell upon such a sight  
as the burning of pale blue stars  
over the soft skin of twilight;

And fancied sleep, at meadow's edge,  
of proud and myriad flower,  
where quetzals dazzled forth  
in displays of regal, enchanted power—

Would she...

If, within her dreaming,  
she inhaled magic and exhaled strife,  
where a celestial voice whispered hope  
of a loving, happy life;

And saw many wonders  
cascading softly in ballet,  
while stardust and moonbeams  
entered her soul to play—

Would she...

And if, upon her awakening,  
standing near her grassy cheek,  
was a fawn drinking quietly  
from a silver-pebbled creek;

With sonnets coming ashore  
as fish bubbled the words,  
while a new life walked towards her  
from beneath a rainbow of birds—

Would she still want to die?

Would she weep and send away  
those painful days into the earth,  
and walk down new paths of sunlight  
holding the jewel of her worth?

*Send me back, to the world;  
bring me there, hold me there,  
keep me from the sky. Leave me,  
if you love me—and kiss me goodbye!*

## Her Day

She knelt down by the creek  
cupped her hands and began to drink  
the fish gave her a wink  
and she began to think:

Oh lover, off running from the sun  
let me be your reason again  
your reason to hold a hand  
let me show you the strength of a friend.

And she stayed for many hours of the day  
collecting flowers and giving tears away  
all the while mother nature would say  
*Your heart needs soothing, my dear  
This is the only way!*

So she pulled away those burrs of denial  
tossed them aside, rank and file  
inhaled the breath of life all the while  
and soon her heart began to smile.

Then with rejoice she thanked the fish  
danced around butterflies, blew them a kiss  
felt her heart had gotten its wish  
and picked a mushroom to make a dish.

Sunset came and soon it was twilight

so she hurried on home like a wren in flight  
thinking to find her lover that night  
hoping that he just might...

And whether it was feather or song  
flower or fragrance  
the earth or its sky  
she doesn't know  
she can't decide.

But during that day  
more had become clear:  
*Your heart is soothed, my dear.*

## A Tree

A tree  
is a treasure burst forth into the sky;  
a fissured relic covered in emeralds  
that change with the voice of equinox.

A tree  
is a benevolent caretaker for the wild;  
a framework of weathered arms  
holding nests, refuge, and insect treats.

A tree  
is a teacher of patience and endurance;  
a primeval soul bearing the fruit and labor  
of the illusion we call Time.

A tree  
is our third parent of unconditional love;  
a haven of cool shade and wonderment  
beneath a sentry of leaves.

## Dryad Weeping on a Fallen Tree

Sitting under the spell of living oaks,  
dryad sits on a tree fallen and dead.  
Through the canopy falls the sun's gold;  
empathetic warmth and just so bright.

She is dressed in a splendid mourning gown,

sewn with chlorophyll and splendors' fingers.  
Her large green eyes are crystal-like;  
scenes of a tree's life play within.

Mist rises like fairy soldiers' ghosts  
beneath her dainty and barefooted feet.  
Tears merge into silent waterfalls  
and her heart beats low like owl wings.

A rustling puts a crack in the silence  
and dryad looks down at the petite sound:  
Leaves covered a seed, covered a growing tree;  
nature is cycles, is fairy spuds to winter snow.

And young tree sprouts where mother spring  
and father sun foster new life.  
Such lessons come to each dryad in youth;  
they have come to her in this ephemeral light.

A nearby butterfly takes to air,  
its dazzle and frailty the wink of beauty's eye.  
With compassion it alights upon dryad's shoulder;  
a gesture of fresh happiness to a broken heart.

Dryad slides from the lifeless oak,  
aglow in the hue of newest wisdom.  
She dances off to darker wood, and butterfly ascends;  
reverie folds up and fades from her brightest eyes.

## Swimming Towards the Surface

Falling-away darkness—a curtain  
screaming with silence, pulled  
off a globe where thoughts are  
blind fish swimming inside light.

Across the finish line: a revelation:  
rain is creek, is river, is ocean, is rain.  
Gone is the concrete mask, chipped  
away with keys that would fit:

The hurricane's eye sees the sun.  
The window of tomorrow is open.

These invisible gifts are wrapped in experience.  
Denial like dust kicked up

and blown away by integrity—and finally, too:  
in these stone eyes is a beating heart.

I could swim out of that subterranean light.  
I could walk on land.

## Somewhere

Somewhere,  
hooks and chains  
hang amid  
peeling  
olive wallpaper  
on  
rusty nails  
once hanging  
pictures  
of  
other times—  
(before  
the walls  
shrank  
and took  
all the  
air away).

Somewhere,  
the  
gentle  
tapping  
of fingers  
on the  
sharp  
edge  
of a  
machete

leads  
  
up to the  
shadowed body  
of a man  
whose  
head  
is a

broken  
light bulb.

## the End

Charcoal spines burning,  
men dethroned of valor,  
a raven-dropping thunderstorm.

Mold on fruit,  
decay on bones—  
lifeless life.

Pale sunlight,  
tired universe,  
hope stuck in quicksand.

Humanity scorned by God:  
disappointed Father.

Now, as we prepare to be forgotten,  
dressing formal for the End  
will be  
unnecessary.

## The Bleak Hour

The  
bleak hour  
when uninvited  
shadows  
gather  
over one  
to pick up the  
fallen hand  
that lay  
still.

Two worlds  
touching—

One ends,  
another is begun.  
Too late if anything left

un-  
done.

The  
bleak hour:  
When  
will it be  
that the  
shadows,  
cast off the  
divine light,  
gather  
over  
me?

Me?

Am I a soul eternally sad?  
God of tears, maker of blue?  
Did the universe rain and flood with disdain?  
Leave me stained, water-colored in shame?  
Do my tears cascade into the desert part of my heart,  
only to lose their vision and dry up?  
Am I the weakest branch of a lifeless tree?  
An ungrown seed, a mud-stuck leaf?  
Is the mirror truthful, is this what I see?  
Is the sullen man staring back really me?

## Beer Can Hands

You could put down that beer can.  
You could even dump out what's left.  
C'mon, pick up that baseball,  
it's not even lunchtime yet.

Did we do something wrong?  
Please don't yell when we're trying to sleep.  
Can't you just calm down?  
Your favorite show is on TV.

O man with the beer can hands,  
you're drunk inside your soul.

Did mom put you down, or do you



frown out the window for fun?  
Those trees aren't going to lift you  
where you need to go.

Look around, we're swarming under you  
like children at the ice cream truck,  
hoping for just one morsel of attention.  
Waiting for our frozen hero.

O man with the beer can hands,  
you're drunk inside our souls.

What would it cost you, anyway?  
Who'd see anything but a loving father?  
And for once, for once you could feel  
welcome in your own damned skin.

## Glass Hope

Curled up, asleep, twitching:  
dreams of worms, dreams of monkeys,  
dreams of a woman's hidden heart.

Trapped inside the shelter of a shell, shell-  
shocked and peering around corners.  
Never pushing either foot against the wind.

*Walk away  
from the phantasmagoric.  
Walk towards  
something real.*

Head hits the floor of this life;  
breaking, spilling, and losing light—  
black goo oozes from the inside.

Consumed is that *conscious hope*,  
made of gold light and glass.  
The shattered remains lost  
or engulfed by tar.

## The Impatient

Dress me in medical green, stick me down with pins.

Take your shiny gold scalpel and operate on me.  
Do your best work, dear demon,  
do your best work on me.

I'm alive you see,  
so do your best work on me.

The sky's beauty smothers all the scenery  
like the doctor over his patient's misery.  
His scalpel shines gold in the white moonlight,  
slicing down through the muddy breeze:

Cut me please.  
Fix me, *please*.

Dress me in medical green, stick me down with pins.  
Take your octopus arms and rearrange the insides of me.  
Do your best work, dear deerhead,  
do your best work on me.

I'm still alive you see,  
so do your best work on me.

### A Lament for Sylvia *Regarding Sylvia Plath*

She is polished by the sun,  
the moon, the veils of sorrow

So hurt by, yet so in love with memories  
that forge concepts into poems.

And they wax the eyes of our melancholy days—  
Could we accept pages less cold to touch?

An unopened birthday gift rests on her desk  
as benevolent bees sting blue stars

And death is a concept buried  
beneath that future winter.

### The Symptoms of My Envy (are clear)

I have reached

often, for jars filled with splendor—  
O splendor and radiance!

I have reached  
often, for those jars put up high—  
O just one and I'll go!

Once, I nearly had one:  
a jar shimmering with an enchanted life;  
a true poet's life. I was close...

But one cannot remain  
climbing these shelves of life;  
I know my jar resides much further down—  
O, I do know!

But jealous I am of the bird  
and his wings, his flight, his song—  
he knows splendor.

Jealous I am of the falling snow  
and the rain, the grace of a season's change—  
they too know splendor.

I am jealous of this world—  
all the greatness that shines beyond anonymity;  
all the love that avoids my open arms.

What have I? What have I done  
that something should admire me?  
I do not know splendor.

Once, I sent for Death.  
But it shook its head *no* and turned away.  
And I was left alone, a bit forlorn,  
in the shadow of its splendor.

## Identity

A favorite place  
constructed by envy.  
The rooster awakens the tragic eye:  
mind-set: focused on painful, martyr death.  
But with age, the numbers keep rising,  
forging ahead, leaving dust  
and brittle ideas in haystacks;

until one day you're tired of wasting  
silent energy on self-corruption—  
bowing your head to truth,  
and death understands.

## Hubristic

On the roof of night, stars dangle umbilical  
cords like worms over starving fish. It's the  
vision behind a moon spitting out poison

over American cities. It's a massacre of our silent,  
invisible angels. They fall on their faces,  
wings breaking as they convulse in flowerbeds.

But time passes, and visions die as new ideals are born.  
We can never be sure of what's next—prophets or not.  
And pirate flags just don't seem appropriate anymore.

What's this? Tigers meandering through traffic jams.  
A new, terrified generation ignorant of lush green  
jungles and bolting prey. But this animal does not

anti-exist as an animal. It never cared about our art,  
or the industrial revolution, or if our eyes roll into the  
back of our heads. And as we continue to nail our

egos to Roman columns, we may one day know a  
giant who plucks no humble thing from life and  
wipes its hands of it. This we should require.

Evolutionary gifts such as this, which know kinship  
to angels and poets, will surely prevail—for the  
fruit of today rots on the untended vines of tomorrow.

## Look at a Photograph

Snail pace, vine grace; choking air from the wild state.  
Liquid face, kill-erase; count the money, miscount the lies.  
Magical place, gone with no trace. Want to see it? Look at a photograph.

Who are we? We're the mighty free, doing as we please.  
Who are we? We're the guiltless guilty, spreading our disease.

We're the eyes in the smoke, the hands with bloody knives.  
We're the grin inside the wound, the greed seeping through.

Snail pace, vine grace; choking air from the wild state.  
Liquid face, kill-erase; count the money, miscount the lies.  
Magical place, gone with no trace. Want to see it? Look at a photograph.

## The Hawk

The sun begins to warm the day. Soft light filters through the fields. The flora awakens to reclaim its place among the ecosystem of our world. A lone red-tailed hawk sits peacefully on the Braeburn Marsh Bird Sanctuary sign, facing the incoming men with their hard-hats and construction maps. Keys to giant yellow machines hang from thick belts around their waists. Steam from a coffee mug rises into the brisk morning air as they huddle together for the day's instruction. The proud raptor sits quietly upon his perch, anticipating a good day for hunting. Much time will be spent soaring across the wide open sky, far above the mayhem that's seeping across the earth. And he knows his life here is near its end. Soon he will have to go away. No one will say goodbye and no one will wish him well. Still, he will go away quietly, and he will go without complaint.

## Little Girl

Her blank eyes drag along a dirt floor.  
Her small feet are bare and cut.  
There falls, from her  
quivering lip, tiny whimpers—  
like a dog lost and hungry.

The tears she cries she wipes away  
and licks from the palm of her hand,  
still her stomach aches with emptiness,  
an emptiness she can't overcome.

Her dreams are an infrequent salvation.  
Her sleep is unsoft and fleeting.  
She shakes, from her  
dusty hair, night's requiem—  
like a doll left far behind.

Where her brother is, she can't remember.  
Where her sister is, she doesn't know.  
Her father is underground someplace,  
and her mother...

Those tears she cries she wipes away  
and licks from the palm of her hand,  
still her heart aches with emptiness,  
an emptiness we've turned away from.

## White Truth

A white glow creeps along walls  
of dirty cities, and even  
countryside dwellings,  
exposing hidden beasts  
by painting their shadows.

The white light moves on,  
soaking into all that is living,  
penetrating locked doors,  
sometimes rejoicing within souls.

It is an entity of white shadow;  
yet it casts from nothing,  
is nothing—  
only a filter through which lies and secrets  
become trapped,  
and skinned,  
and exposed.

Wherever deceit lay,  
the light hovers above it  
or beside it,  
sometimes directly behind it—  
but *always* near.

For those lies are the evil black beasts  
that the white truth of light pursues,  
knowing that black cannot hide under  
another color for too long.

## 7 New Stars

*Honoring the crew of Space Shuttle Columbia*

Seven new stars  
Seven new lights  
Today I became  
a better man in my life

Call it inspiration  
Call it remorse  
Whatever it's called  
I'm changed

As a boy who loved the sky  
the stars, the planets  
the Earth  
What I've been thinking is how  
it might have been me

And how incredibly lucky  
and proud  
and heroic I'd be

to have lived a dream for us all.

## To You

You laugh, and the world unfolds.  
Light falls like rain, stains the dark.  
I'm helpless, without speech;  
your soul becomes the blue of my eyes.

Forgive me if I stray—  
To you.

You smile, and no wars ever were.  
You hold time in place, erase the hands.  
I'm overcome, filled with adoration;  
my soul becomes the brown of your eyes.

Forgive me if I write these words—  
To you.

You speak, and the otter shakes a whisker.  
You enchant me, a sea horse ballet.  
And I swim, deep where tears shed;  
now my poetry breathes under oceans.

Forgive me if I expose my heart—  
To you.

## By Way of Your Misleadings

I am cold, wrapped in blankets;  
so thoughtful in bed.  
I'm upside down, frozen solid,  
in the frost-bit grip of my longing for you.

I am sedate, wallpaper quiet;  
so in tune with my heart.  
I'm twisted up, void and sinking,  
down in the pit of my dreaming of you.

I cannot convince life to rearrange its affairs.  
I cannot re-ink the book of destiny or love.  
I am a slave to these withouts—

But I fight!

Was I not the sun which penetrated your windows?  
The light which filled the dark corners of your uncertainty?  
And was I not the swallowtail on your shoulder,  
the ebony jewelwing around your feet?

If there was something you admired, I became it.  
If your heart was sore, I kissed it.  
I was every autumn leaf changing  
and falling along the contours of your soul.

You are a thief!

You've stolen the map to love's horizon,  
left me stranded on clouds full of rain.  
Where has my responsibility gone? My reason?  
You took it all, replaced it with nothing.

Now I'm lethargic in the crack of your heart,  
the garments of adoration thinned out by moths.  
A treasure of love's potential surrounds us—  
each yawning jewel bright with boredom.

## In This Fragile Time Between Heartbeats

Dreams soaked in opaline sprays,  
tea parties, and Canadian sun:  
what the world talked about was  
love, and life; life without it.

If I wasn't on my knees



covered in earthquakes and dams,  
I'd have Hercules arms  
for holding such philosophies again.

But somewhere along the way  
I fell off the dioramic stage  
and wept for jewels taken back  
to their divine satchels.

Are such treasures only for loan?  
Is this universe to be so selfish?  
I'd fight whoever was responsible,  
no matter the blasphemy!

Meantime, a remnant glow remains—

And so the rats tip over and boil,  
the white lines stay blown away,  
and the meteor shower in my heart  
doesn't sparkle out.

In this fragile time between heartbeats  
the embers burn their brightest, their strongest,  
lest this long, dark winter  
suppresses heat's intent.

## Where She Sleeps

Where she sleeps, she is dreaming.  
Her ocean folding over,  
roses falling through it.  
Thorns tearing wet scars  
like a shark fin dogfight.

A flash of blue eyes:  
blue peels, reveals brown,  
flakes off, uncovers white—

A white candle burns  
in the forefront of her mind.

Where she sleeps, she is awaking.  
Her candle melts away,  
just the wick will remain.  
Sunrise tells the dream  
*goodbye* with its light.

A flash of a child's eyes:  
little girl, reveals angel,  
jumps away, reveals boy—

The balloons of fantasy deflate  
in the forefront of her mind.

Where she sleeps, she is awake.  
Angels jump on her bed,  
tossing light above their heads.  
Her ocean walks ashore  
carrying remnants of poetry.

A flash of brown eyes:  
brown peels, reveals blue,  
melts away, uncovers herself—

A mirror reflects reality  
in the fairytale of her mind.

And where she sleeps, *he* is waiting:  
standing under the storm of broken time,  
soaked with the Paris rain.

## Where He Sleeps

Where he sleeps, he is awake.  
Grabs the keys, goes.  
Traffic, work, endless din.  
Dim hope of ever touching  
her ocean skin.

A flash of blue eyes:  
blue peels, reveals brown,  
melts away, uncovers himself—

A mirror reflects reality  
in the happy ending of his mind.

Where he sleeps, he is falling asleep.  
His wax emotions melt away,  
just the wick will remain.  
Sunset tells the dream  
*welcome* with its night.

A flash of the sandman's eyes:

anxiety lifts, reveals thought,  
drifts away, reveals sleep—

The balloons of fantasy expand  
in the forefront of his mind.

Where he sleeps, he is dreaming.  
His city folding over,  
roses falling through it.  
Thorns tearing concrete scars  
like a sad song dogfight.

A flash of brown eyes:  
brown peels, reveals blue,  
flakes off, uncovers white—

A white candle burns  
in the forefront of his mind.

Where he sleeps, *she* is waiting:  
waving under the storm of broken time,  
holding a large umbrella.

Love Will Glue These Br-oken Pi-ece-s / She was new again, like she'd been born again, but with the knowledge. Like she had walked down from a mountain: cool skin, fresh thought, light eyes, and a fire burning for life. The past was secondary now. All the old romances turned dust-worthy. All the doubt dispersed. She was ready to face the world with open arms; to follow every step she took into a forward, sun-splashed direction. Love would not shove her away, not anymore—it was her ambition to curl up in its silky arms. It was her walk towards paradise, her vintage wine longing for a taste—and she could taste it now, on the lips of her subconscious; it was bittersweet, like strawberries.

“I love myself. I love my life. Love surrounds me and love will follow me.”

She spoke those words at every corner of every day. They launched her over obstacles with painless effort. Mental wounds healed without scars. The moon, the stars, and the sun smiled down. If it stormed, the rains were pleasant, shimmering with twilight sky. Clouds floated overhead, shaping themselves into chivalries. She hoped all future days would follow such gestures. And they would, when her true love came to embellish them.

He awoke mid-night, mid-spring, midway through a dream. He dreamt of a girl. He recalled vividly: his hands shaking, his heart racing, his mind not sure if she was real or unreal. They were in a meadow radiant with dew. She held poems in her hands, had shooting stars in her hair. Her eyes were earths: blue and green, mixed with sky and gold sunlight. Pollen and strawberry stains covered her dress. She shimmered like a rainbow.

And he became nervous, for he knew he could love this girl, but he had loved once before and his heart had been turned shy. Yet he stood in her path, waiting for her kiss, longing to hold what he so rightly deserved. She was the angel atop his life's tree, he knew it. So he waited, and as she came closer his eyes teared up and his heart beat with desperation. The world held its breath, destiny exhaled its mirage. Then came a whisper, "We'll be together soon," and the dream was over.

That's when he woke up, feeling new again, like he'd been born again, but with the knowledge... He opened the curtains, looked out the window and said, "I love myself. I love my life. Love surrounds me and love will follow me."

## Beneath the Waves

He floats on green sea, sky softens eyes twilight blue.  
Fish set course for curious, jump like finned rainbows.  
The heart ventured at daybreak, went searching with sail;  
anchored soul waits for resurrection, swirls with dreams.

Apart since sunrise, he's been at opposite ends of her hour.  
Life sleeps on shore, sunset bends towards fiction.  
Love has splashed her, soaked the heart with promises;  
angelic soul lifts, maiden albatross flies.

He waits, she will come—  
and they will swim down together.

## The Hearts' Embrace

I walked along the torn edges of her spirit  
and understood the silent flow of her blood.  
It made me run out from beneath the sun  
into the glossy shade where she rested:

Sun-winged butterflies lay dead around her solitude.  
Anger hung from chains, sadness peered from its cage.  
Disdain rained from above, smothering  
the embers of her dire brilliance.

I tried to speak, but tears tossed my words away.

Dew dripped from leaves and beheld our souls.  
A fragrant wind settled in on the moment.  
I looked at her chest and saw why she cried—  
If I'd known her heart was broken I'd have slain the cause.

A rumble went through the darkness as her pain stirred.  
A flock of subfusc ravens peered on with dark intent.  
I sat beside her. I put her head upon my shoulder,  
I did not know if she'd remember my name.

Quietly, I blew whispers through her hair:

*I will hold you, protect you,  
put my strength around you, like a castle.  
Lay my cheek to yours, and warm your face,  
make you feel safe enough to leave this place.*

That sent fires burning and ravens fleeing.  
Chains hit the ground, falling on mounds of red ash.  
The cage went cold, its contents flown away,  
the wind carried off the loitering disdain.

*And I will cup my hands,  
collect the sorrow which drips from your heart.  
Splash my face with your pain,  
find redemption as I look through your eyes.*

*Because I have come, my love,  
not to save us,  
but to re-create us.*

## A Moment is Riding Time

A moment is riding time  
like a horse over the hill  
bringing strength—

A moment is floating through time  
like a ship across the sea  
bringing wealth—

There is a moment  
tossed by a fairy's whim,  
blown forward by her breath,  
and carried away to find us.

There is a moment  
set aside for you and me,  
but it may take awhile  
as these things do, my love.

It may take awhile  
as these things do.

Our moment is conquering time  
like a white flag rising  
ending battle—

Our moment is drawing near  
like a heart breaking chains  
ending restraint—

## Love and Words

There awoke in me, on a night enlightened by  
magnificent starlight, fancies for poetic pursuit in  
the name of love. And of this, an autumn-haired,  
spring-eyed beauty of sweet unawareness.

I became a romantic, for all intents and purposes,  
and bowed as a knight to his maiden in waiting.  
I was taken. I was subdued and held prisoner—  
I was willing.

In her heart were the moist soils of Eden, full of music  
not heard since the day love was cast upon the world.  
I took her hand and splashed the grass with my melting,  
saw angels under the gospel of her voice.

I was no longer just a man, but a vessel for poetry.  
And I finally knew what it was to be alive:  
To inhale love, to exhale words, to truly breathe—  
like a sonnet venturing from the page.

## The Key to a Woman's Heart is Within the Man

Soundless, he crashed along her walls.  
Fell like a bruised rock, died shivering in the clover.  
She stirred, asleep: an oblivious, silent orchestra.  
Autumn leaves and music entered his death—  
inner seasons began to change.

The stars shined like a million candles held by darkness.  
His cadaver eyes were illuminated, lit by the crescent moon.  
His body twitched: the soul threw the Reaper in chains.

By morning he was breathing, somehow stronger—  
built less of stone, more of dream.

He opened his arms, embraced the air's eternal form,  
took the earth's colors and drank them like forgotten wine.  
He realized he'd had to die at her feet  
before he could be alive in her arms.

*I adore you! I adore you, my love!*

She awoke with colors exploding over her;  
his caring words were sailing down.  
Two bluebirds built a nest nearby. She put out two cups of tea.  
The morning lifted off the ground and turned her eyes on.  
She sighed. She blew a kiss over the garden wall...

His chest cracked, crumbled, blew away.  
A fresh, wet heart emerged and stretched its wings.  
It beat new, beat with a selfless purpose:  
to pump love through all his veins;  
to take her hand and lead her towards forever...

So he spread his arms, soared into her beautiful waiting.  
Inhaled her sweet stare and found a soft place to land.  
And when he dropped glass shadows on boulders, destroying his fears,  
a gold key fell from the sky and splashed in her cup of tea.

*I love you!* he proclaimed, wiping tears from his eyes.  
*I know,* she said, kissing him. *I've always known.*

## Sentimental Blue

It's a forget-me-not flower.  
It's a surprise letter by mail.  
It's the love song's artistic hue.  
It's the color of my words to you.

It's the waves crashing in.  
It's the ocean beyond the shore.  
It's a warm sky filtering through.  
It's my eyes when I look at you.

It's a crayon in a child's hand.  
It's a hug from their small arms.  
It's a glass heart speaking true.  
It's my tears because I miss you.

Sentimental Blue

## Kaleidoscope

The kaleidoscope  
    from rubbing my eyes  
water-  
    falls  
over the walls  
    of my dream  
where I wait patiently  
    with roses  
for your arrival.

Beneath my feet  
    it washes in, it lights up the ground  
and but for the sky  
    nothing is one color, but many.

You walk up,  
    splashing kaleidoscope  
between your toes.

    Salmon swim up the mountain  
to where our love will dance  
    around  
the brim of a cloud.

In this dream  
    we speak not with words  
but with caresses, fond  
    glances, smiles.

I doubted love before today,  
    but after that first kiss  
I'm convinced  
    that I was blessed,  
and we were meant to be.

## Holding Hands (a simple pleasure)

I sit at my desk this morning,  
turn my head from the computer  
and stare at my hands.



The aroma of hazelnut coffee  
swirls around me.

And I think—  
My god, these hands have *really* accomplished.  
They've done a million interesting and uninteresting things;  
they've been to so many places.

Suddenly, I'm walking along the lake,  
watching seagulls coast over the waves.  
And then, with the softest of touches,  
my hand is taken and I return to her.

The aroma of spring love  
swirls around us.

I look over into her beautiful, adoring eyes,  
and it occurs to me that simple pleasures  
are nothing short  
of miracles.

## Crestfallen

Gray mist yawns on my shoulder;  
lifts, stretches, seeps into my eyes.  
It expects me not to complain,  
but I say, Not today. *Please*, not today.

But it doesn't go away.

Now my head feels like a dead imagination;  
thoughtless as a cloud, drowned worms in a puddle.  
Every word I've ever written doesn't like me.

I place my head in my hands  
and start to worry:

She could walk in, at any second,  
and see me as I really am—  
a heap of gray; a river of colors  
draining down the sewer.

## Denied

She could kiss me  
Swirl me into a daze  
And awaken me  
On a rosebud

She could taste me  
Wrap her lips over me  
And spit me out  
As merlot

She could embrace me  
Slide me inside a gift  
And shout my name  
Into history

But all she did was inhale me  
Mold me into a breath  
And sail me off  
With a *shhhhh*

### This is Your New Life (w/PIN #)

Succumb to the ideal,  
succumb to the Way.

The way is this way, sir, come with me.  
We have coffee and plastic flowers.  
We have brick sky and concrete earth.  
Please, come inside the twist—  
your mind will straighten out soon enough.

We will call you Mr. Industry,  
Mr. Tie, Mr. Motor-running, Mr. Cash or Credit.  
Say goodbye to God, say goodbye to Love,  
and say hello to the Way.

Welcome  
to your new life.

### Kicking Sand in the Face of Indolence

It sits, like a wet cotton ball.  
Covered with dust, hair,  
and false starts.

Hours have dropped from the clock,  
the insolent wind has carried them away.  
But time still goes, and goes, and goes.

The cotton ball? It lies, it lies,  
it stays put. Festered. Festering.  
Willful, but left without device.

What's been muddied in the mind of it?  
How many tires have squealed by  
and yet it does not flinch?

It is restless, waiting for a wave to crash,  
to wash away the washed-up rhetoric  
which convinced it it had nothing left to say.

To leave its dead crab countenance  
on the shore of this black-ink sea—  
And my brand new feet come by

and kick on it the white sands.  
To cover it. To *bury* it.  
To see it dead, and something new arise.

## The Life Granted

He's a fetus on a couch: drinking coffee,  
waiting for the newspaper, hoping the Top Story  
says he'll grow, stand up, walk away from these  
dusty shelves, recycled sunlight, yellow-worn poems.

Shouldn't wait for an obvious sign. Should  
seize this gloomy day: lay tracks around:  
new train, out of town, all directions going  
but down, down, never down.

*Cat at the clock*  
*Time full of rats*  
*Clock explodes, rats exposed*  
*What happens next?*

He smashes flies against the lamp lit wall, his caricature  
manifested by an enlarged, swampy shadow-fall.  
Twists the sides of his fists until nothing remains,  
just lifeless nightmares on sticky chains.

Silence. All he can think of is Lon Chaney as  
The Hunchback, the monster. The silent film's sound  
like the end of a record, a leaving behind of the familiar—  
a world filled with the hiss of irritated snakes.

Then a yellow maple leaf whips and sticks to the window.  
The sun warms its back with a ray. He cannot turn away  
though he tries, he tries, he tries.  
And it says without a voice:

*Winter comes but will come to an end.  
A life granted means death in life, my friend.  
A baby won't die if it opens its eyes.  
It's in love with the world despite its cries.*

### It's All Good (after the rain falls)

Escaped reverie floats across the spider-eyed skyline.  
A frayed, torn edge dangles in the stove-hot wind.  
Antiseptic thoughts drip from her cold, charcoal eyes—  
What could she do but try and mend?

Tongue like thread, voice the unplugged machine.  
Spit to shore by a black lake, landing on musty old leaves.  
Each and every boxed up, packed away tear crashes  
to the forefront—yesterday cracks wide open.

She screams it out: all her sadness, all the madness.  
Dark clouds release the past, drenching the moment.  
It seeps down, channels through new ground;  
a dormant seed awakens, busts through the rock.

Yes! the sun is coming out!  
The dark, sinister heel is lifting.  
A hairball falls from the mouth of discontent.  
The sad-faced wind-up toy goes over the fiery edge.

Down comes the sunlight, in thousands of rays;  
descending, cleansing arrowheads of light from the sky.  
Golden needle-points sketch her eyes into rainbows.  
They may be small, but in sheer numbers they conquer.

She stands up, wipes herself off,  
and skips a rock over the blue lake.  
The benevolent scenery picks her up in its vines;  
tosses her over to the flipside of life.

## My Unread Poetry

A wooden floor, unswept in years.  
Shelves thick with dust.  
A rocking chair near a cold fireplace.  
An old me.

Outside the log cabin structure  
is the emerald green, tawny brown  
architecture of a summered forest.  
Downhill due east, hear the waves  
lift atop its mother sea.

When you're convinced that beauty  
and soul have fallen in love,  
return to the rocking chair  
and look near my feet.

There you'll find, in this quiet place  
not far from the sea, beautiful poetry  
written by me. I say the poetry on  
the floor was written by me.

*Go ahead, read it. I won't be disturbed.*

Water from the tap is pale yellow.  
Yellow flowers in the windowsill.  
Scent of pine is sublime  
with time will cover my odor.

*So nice.*

And everything here is peaceful, serene,  
where beauty abounds at a cabin  
not far from the sea:

And it's all there, in the poetry  
scattered around my feet.  
I say it's all there in the poetry  
scattered around my (cold) feet.

## A Glimpse of Where I'm Going

The autumn leaves have fallen,  
their short lives filled with grace.  
Now they rest beneath snow.

I'm speechless  
with so much to say.

But my eyes have grown wiser,  
and a shade closer  
to inspiring spring.

####

**About the author:**

Jason Sturner was born in Harvey, Illinois, and raised in the western suburbs of Chicago. He has published four books of poetry: *Kairos*, *10 Love Poems*, *Selected Poems 2004-2007*, and *Collected Poems*. In addition to poetry he writes flash fiction, short stories and nature essays. He resides in Geneva, Illinois, and works as a botanist at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle.

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